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ARTICLES:

(1) Prime Minister Aso: If North Korea launches a missile, we will bring it to the UN Security Council

Nikkei Online
March 2, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso said early this afternoon that if North Korea launches a long-range missile, no matter what form it might take, the issue will be taken to the UN Security Council. Speaking before reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, Aso indicated that even if North Korea says it is a satellite, the launch is in violation of a UN resolution that prohibits North Korea from engaging in any ballistic missile activities.

Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone also told Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao when they met yesterday that the launch would be a violation of the UN Security Council resolution.

(2) New Komeito unable to draw up election strategy

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March 2, 2009

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Many New Komeito members are now cautious about the notion of the House of Representatives being dissolved in April for a general election in May. The view is gaining ground in the New Komeito that it will be difficult to fight in the next House of Representatives election under the leadership of Prime Minister Taro Aso, whose popularity has plunged. However, since the party last year backed Aso as successor to then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to lead the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) into the next Lower House election, it cannot take action to remove Aso from office. Although the New Komeito has yet to draw up any election strategy, it intends to make efforts to expand support by setting its own policy.

New Komeito leader Akihiro Ota called on Aso on Feb. 16 at the Prime Minister's Office and told him:

"Since a next supplementary budget is closely related to the timing of Lower House dissolution, you should carefully look into the scale of an extra budget and when to compile it after seeing the political situation, as well as corporate financial reports, which will be released in March."

Ota was concerned that Aso's remark about a supplementary budget might make the LDP's situation become more fluid, leading to calls for Lower House dissolution. Therefore, Ota urged Aso to be careful.

Even New Komeito Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa, who had been eager for the next general election to be held under Aso's leadership, said: "There is no other choice but to choose the best timing. A New Komeito lawmaker complained: "About 80 posters with a picture taken with the prime minister were damaged this year." Propelled out by the resignation of Shoichi Nakagawa as finance minister and state minister of financial affairs, New Komeito members have been dissatisfied with the Aso administration.

The basic position of senior New Komeito members is that if the party tries to unseat the prime minister, it would not be understood (by the LDP). The reason is that when (then) Prime Minister Fukuda quit office last September, some LDP lawmakers criticized the New Komeito for creating a trend for Prime Minister Aso. If the New Komeito moves to remove Aso from office, it will certainly come under criticism from the public.

Under such circumstances, the New Komeito has launched an effort to substantially revise its manifesto (set of campaign pledges) for the upcoming general election, which the party drafted last fall.

The New Komeito's draft manifesto, which was revealed on March 1, includes a long list of its own policy measures, including improvement in social security, as well as economic stimulus measures. A senior party member said: "We will come up with a policy so that the public can clearly understand politics that the New Komeito aims at." The remark exudes the New Komeito's stance of acting in self-defense.

The New Komeito seems to be using its manifesto as a strategic move for holding discussions regarding a new coalition government, if the LDP and New Komeito fail to secure a majority of the Lower House seats. The Aso cabinet is struggling with a disapproval rating of 80 PERCENT. New Komeito leader Ota has begun to hint that his party may not stick to its coalition with the LDP after the election,

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noting: "Political realignment will occur after the general election. The formation of a coalition government will be decided by the result of the election." A senior New Komeito member said: "We want to come up with major policy in order to make it a card to be used when political realignment occurs."

(3) In anti-piracy map exercise, rules on weapons use also to be confirmed

YOMIURI ONLINE
March 2, 2009

Joint map exercise of "convoy escort," which will be carried out by Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) warships in waters off Somalia, Africa, as part of efforts to combat piracy, started at the MSDF officer candidate school in Meguro, Tokyo, this morning.

The exercise has brought together about 155 persons mainly from the Defense Ministry, as well as from the Cabinet Secretariat, the Foreign Ministry, the Land, Infrastructure, Transport & Tourism Ministry, the Justice Ministry, and the Japan Coast Guard. During the exercise, the participants will confirm what steps should be taken by maritime safety officials on board and rules on SDF officials' use of weapons, on the assumption of several scenarios. These include: (1) a private ship approaches a Japan-related vessel on a patrol mission; (2) a pirate ship fires shots; and (3) an escort ship receives contact from a private vessel navigating nearby saying that it is being attacked by pirates. The exercise will continue until tomorrow evening.

(4) Interview with CSIS President Hamre on DPJ Ozawa's U.S. 7th Fleet remark: Call for withdrawal of U.S. troops would distance U.S. from Japan

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
March 2, 2009

Sunohara Tsuyoshi

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, speaking about national security policy, said last week that that the "U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet alone is sufficient to maintain the U.S. military presence in Japan." How has this controversial remark been taken in the U.S.? The Nikkei asked Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) President John Hamre for his view about the Ozawa remark. Hamre chairs the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, directly linked to Secretary of Defense Gates, and is close to President Barack Obama.

Japan to encounter nuclear issue

-- How do you take the Ozawa remark?

I have never been of the mind that Japan should always do as it is

told by the U.S. The integration of Japan and the U.S. has advanced dynamically. In my view, Japan and the U.S. used to be like and elder brother and younger brother, but we no longer have such a relationship. We should not look back over our past but should consider our future.

If Japan does not want to maintain the current partnership (alliance), Japan will have to consider increasing its defense

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spending. It might need to consider outlays equivalent to 3-4 PERCENT of the nation's gross national product (GNP). If Japan moves away from its alliance with the U.S., it will have to seriously face up to security challenges in this region.

-- There is also the problem of the nuclear umbrella when considering the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Nuclear deterrence is also a fundamental issue. If Japan cuts back on the alliance with the U.S despite the nuclear threats from North Korea and China, it will have to face this problem head on. I wonder if Japan will be able to ensure its safety from such nuclear threats on its own.

-- Do you mean the view of stationing only the U.S. 7th Fleet in Japan is not realistic?

The Navy alone, or the Air Force or Army alone, does not constitute the fundamental basis of national security. Joint operation among the three forces is a prerequisite. If Ozawa really aims to do so (to leave only the U.S. 7th Fleet in Japan), he might mean that Japan will upgrade the capabilities of the Air Self-Defense Force and the Ground Self-Defense Force.

New U.S. administration's intention

-- Was the Obama administration's priority to security policy reflected in the preferential treatment given to Japan?

That intention naturally was behind the dispatch of the secretary of State to Japan and the invitation of the Japanese prime minister to the White House as the President's first foreign guest. The administration wanted to show its view that keeping a favorable relationship with Japan will serve our fundamental interests in Asia. The administration's stance is not simply intended to seek economic support. President Obama expects reliable partners to share responsibility as much as possible.

-- Do you think that the Ozawa remark has put a damper on the administration's aim?

The U.S. administration, now beset by major issues, would not welcome it if the security environment surrounding Asia suddenly turns unstable. If Japan calls on the U.S. to withdraw its troops, a distance and a vacuum will be created between the two countries. China has been expanding its defense budget, and its military buildup remains non-transparent. These elements must be considered comprehensively. It was a surprise to me (that Ozawa made a remark that lacked such consideration).

A person with real leadership ability considers what Japan should do on the basis of objective assessment of security environment. I would like to emphasize that the Japan-U.S. alliance is a bargain and a tried and true alliance system for both countries.

(5) Two civic groups call for global attention to damage caused by Okinawa bases at conference in U.S.

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
March 2, 2009

Shoko Kakazu, Washington

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Representatives of an Okinawa peace civic liaison group and an anti-heliport group made their case against bases on Okinawa at the Security without Empire National Organizing Conference on Foreign Military Bases. The conference began at American University in Washington D.C. on Feb. 27.

In the general meeting held on the morning of Feb. 28, Suzuyo Takasato, representative of the Okinawa peace civic group, reported on the current state of U.S. bases in Okinawa. Takasato also spoke of the crimes, human rights abuses, and environmental damage. Takasato was followed by three representatives from Iraq and Latin American countries.

Eight workshops took place in the afternoon. In the workshop for eliminating U.S. bases in the Asia-Pacific region, representatives from Guam, Hawaii, Okinawa and South Korea reported on their respective histories and base-related damage, exposing common issues.

Tomihiroshi Ashi, representative of the anti-heliport group from Okinawa, explained the planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the coastal area of the Henoko district in Nago, using a chart. Ashi underline the need for cooperation among countries hosting U.S. bases, saying: "Unless Guam, Hawaii, and South Korea, as well as Japan, work together, true peace will not come to Asia."

Ann Wright, a retired army reserve colonel, also called for resistance to violence against women on bases.

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(6) Interview with DPJ Vice President Katsuya Okada -- DPJ will not endorse Guam International Agreement based on relocation of Futenma Air Station to Henoko district; DPJ will achieve results within one year after taking helm of government

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)
March 2, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan Vice President Katsuya Okada gave an interview to the Okinawa Times in Naha on March 1. In it, Okada discussed the party's response to Diet approval of the Guam International Agreement and eagerness for taking the helm of government.

Interviewed by Yoshiya Taira

-- How is (the DPJ) going to deal with the Guam International Agreement?

"At present, our party has yet to decide what our response will be. But I don't think the party is in a position to endorse an agreement that is based on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the Henoko district in Nago.

-- In connection with the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, President Ichiro Ozawa said, "The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet is enough to secure the U.S. presence in the Far East." How should that statement

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be taken?

"President Ozawa's comment means that the presence of the 7th Fleet would be sufficient strictly in terms of Japan's defense, although not immediately. But the U.S. forces in Japan have another aspect of contributing to the peace and security of Asia and the Pacific. He did not refer to that part."

"There is a need to discuss (the question of U.S. force realignment)

that transcends status quo thinking. Acting as if someone has hit a beehive, the government and the ruling parties are making a big deal out of it without considering that point. That is because they have lost the ability to think."

-- What is your view of Prime Minister Taro Aso?

"The Liberal Democratic Party is showing signs of impending collapse. The premiership has been handed from Abe to Fukuda and then to Aso in a short period of time. They all enjoyed overwhelming support when they were picked. (The Aso cabinet) will not hold on for more than a few months. The LDP is corrupt, and there is no one who can become prime minister. I think the problem is the LDP rather than Prime Minister Aso."

-- When do you think the House of Representatives will be dissolved?

"It is a matter for the prime minister and the government to decide, so I cannot predict when that will happen. But given the likelihood that the Aso administration will not hold out for long, I think chances are high that the LDP will carry out a presidential election after the budget and related bills are enacted and that a general election will be called this spring under the new LDP president."

-- Are you eager to take over the reins of government?

"We are drawing up a manifesto that will enable people to feel there will be a change in government. (The manifesto) will feature ways to change bureaucracy-led politics, shore up the economy, and improve business conditions with an eye on Japan's future. Within one year after taking power, we will achieve results that will be visible to the public. We will aim at a victory of next year's House of Councillors election to grab a working majority in the Upper House as well."

-- There are objections in the DPJ Okinawa prefectural chapter about the party's decision to endorse Mikio Shimoji of the People's New Party.

"I would like to see the problem resolved for the sake of our taking over the reins of government."

"Schisms within the opposition camp would not result in a change of administration. When a DPJ administration is launched, there should not be a case where there is no Lower House member from Okinawa who can speak on behalf of Okinawa."

(7) Interview with former USTR Schwab: U.S. trade policy has yet to be materialized: Democratic Party split over freedom and protection

NIKKEI (Page 7) (Full)
February 28, 2009

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Following the ongoing global recession, protectionist moves are becoming visible in various countries. The Nihon Keizai Shimbun has asked former United States Trade Representative (USTR) Susan Schwab, who is visiting Japan, about the Obama administration's trade policy and prospects for trade liberalization talks.

-- Some observers say that the Obama administration's trade policy is protectionist. What direction do you think it will take?

"President Obama avoided referring to the trade issue in the early stage of the campaign. However, since the rival Clinton camp started calling for reviewing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), he had to make a response. He presumably did not want to clarify his trade policy at heart. That is because there is disagreement in the Democratic Party between those who advocate free trade and those who support protectionism, attaching importance to employment."

"In a speech delivered after taking office, President Obama laid

emphasis on key areas, such as medical services. He did not touch on trade policy. At the moment, he is busily engaged with the transition of power that coincided with the economic crisis. It has been only a month since the launching of his administration. I think he has yet to firm up his trade policy."

-- There is an impression that his opposition to a "Buy American" provision in the economic stimulus legislation was vague.

"When the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives took the initiative in drafting the legislation, it became difficult for the Obama administration to deal with the issue. Even though the confrontation in the Senate was not so severe, in the House of Representatives, the Democratic Party pressed ahead with matters without consulting with the Republican Party. Strange legislation has been established without the involvement of the Republican Party in the policy-setting process. I believe the president himself was surprised."

-- What is the real intent of the administration?

"The real intent and principles of the Obama administration overlap. To begin with, the Obama administration did not want to give the impression that its 800 billion dollar economic stimulus package would benefit foreign companies. This is a realistic political decision. On the other hand, the administration needed to avoid international criticism that his policy is protectionist. As such, it resorted to the form of procuring U.S.-made products on a priority basis within the scope of not infringing on such international agreements as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

"This is an afterthought. But it may have sent a message to countries that have not yet signed the WTO's government procurement agreement. That is because non-signatory nations will find it decisively disadvantageous to enter the U.S. market. There also could be high hopes for producing the effect of urging China to sign that agreement and aim for the liberalization and transparency of its government procurement market."

-- How do you view the future of multilateral trade liberalization talks sponsored by the WTO?

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"The stance of emerging countries will determine the success or failure of the talks. The world is now faced with an economic crisis. In particular, what approach India and China will make in view of the overall picture of the global economy will hold the key. When the talks broke down in July last year, China's determination to clinch a deal was wavering, benefiting India, which remained hard-line. No serious discussion will take place before the election in India, which will be called as early as this April."

-- Can we expect any change in China's stance?

"I have an impression that an increasing number of Chinese government leaders understand the reality of the global economy. They are still learning. However, they are skilled in complex multilateral negotiations. China's logic so far has been that if it continues to grow, it will contribute to the global economy. They are, however, beginning to understand that such is not enough.

"China will increasingly become an important trade partner for the U.S. The U.S. should tenaciously work on China to liberalize its trade.

(Interviewer: Editorial board member Yasuhiko Ota)

(8) Nozomu Nakaoka's eye-opening experience about America

Saturday, February 21, 2009

An exclusive interview with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton:
Joined her traveling press corps as a blogger

Having one's own blog is popular in the United States. A person who posts his or her opinion there is called a blogger. It is common for a leading newspaper and the like to introduce a blogger's views, describing him or her as an influential blogger. Scholars also actively use their blogs to publicize their analyses and critiques. On my blog, I posted an article about the White House having issued a press card to a blogger (April 1, 2005, "The story of the first blogger to be given a White House press card"). The opportunities are growing for a journalist to be successful without belonging to any large news company. In other words, journalism is becoming less monopolized by large news companies. But compared to the conditions in the United States, bloggers have yet to win national recognition in Japanese journalism. It is not easy (for an independent journalist) to approach an information source and write his or her independent analytical comments. Unless one goes beyond the realm of amateur journalism, they cannot compete with journalists belonging to large media companies. I am a professional freelance journalist who has contributed articles to magazines and the like. A blog is an effective means to send out messages, but without a blog, it is difficult in some cases to express one's views. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Japan on Feb. 16. She was accompanied by the press corps that flew with her from the United States. I was allowed to join them as a blogger to cover the Secretary's activities. I also learned that it was Secretary Clinton's order to let a Japanese blogger join the traveling press. I was also allowed to have an exclusive interview with Secretary Clinton as a freelance journalist. The following is a report on that.

One month has passed since Barack Obama became U.S. President. The U.S. economic stimulus bill (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act)

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passed Congress on Feb. 17 and President Obama signed it into law. Meeting with stiff resistance from Republicans in Congress, he was put on the hot seat and forced to compromise. President Obama is said to have achieved his first victory with the passage of a record \$787 billion stimulus plan in a short period of time. His next challenge will be foreign policy. Vice President Joe Biden has already visited Europe. On Feb. 16, Secretary Clinton arrived in Japan, her first foreign destination. After Indonesia and South Korea, she finished her tour in China. President Obama picked Canada for his first foreign trip. (The U.S. administration's) first foreign policy effort was designed to demonstrate role-sharing, with President Obama opting for Canada, America's largest trade partner. Vice President Biden went to Europe, and Secretary of State Clinton, to Asia. Their decisions on where to visit first seem to have various implications.

The first foreign destination for then President George W. Bush was Mexico. Because President Obama and Secretary Clinton did not refer to Japan during their presidential campaigns, there were complaints that they were slighting Japan. There was speculation in Britain, as well, that the Obama administration was taking a policy slighting Britain. But because the British foreign secretary met with President Obama ahead of other foreign leaders, the British people seem to have felt somewhat relieved. Similarly, the Japanese government seems to have felt relieved with Secretary Clinton's decision to visit Japan first and President Obama's invitation to Prime Minister Taro Aso to come to the White House as the first foreign visitor.

Secretary Clinton arrived in Japan on the evening of Feb. 16 and left for Indonesia on the early morning of Feb. 18.

Last weekend, I received a telephone call from someone at the U.S. Embassy who asked me: "There has been an instruction from the Department of State to include a Japanese blogger in the press corps traveling with Secretary Clinton. You, Mr. Nakaoka, are a blogger, aren't you? Can you join them?" I said in response, "I am a journalist and have my own blog," and I accepted the offer, seeing it as the chance of a lifetime. I heard later on from a U.S. Embassy employee that including a Japanese blogger in the traveling press corps was the Secretary's personal desire. At present, bloggers' influence is becoming really strong in the United States. In

reality, bloggers cannot be ignored politically.

The following is what I experienced during Secretary Clinton's visit to Japan. On Feb. 16, I got on a van from the U.S. Embassy along with other staffers and headed for Haneda Airport to greet Secretary Clinton. It was the coldest evening of the winter. Exposed to the biting sea breeze, I felt my body would freeze while waiting for her arrival. The Secretary arrived at the airport at 7:30 p.m. A welcome ceremony was held at a VIP room away from Haneda Airport. Secretary Clinton played up the importance of Japan-U.S. relations, saying, "The bilateral relationship between the United States and Japan is a cornerstone in our efforts around the world." In response, a Japanese government representative offered words of welcome, saying, "The fact that you as Secretary of State chose Japan as your first foreign destination indicates that the U.S. government attaches importance to Japan-U.S. relations." The Secretary's Japan visit began with an exchange of encouragements in consideration of the criticism that the Obama administration had been slighting relations with Japan.

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After the welcoming ceremony, I got on a bus along with traveling reporters who had arrived in Japan on the special plane from the United States and headed for their hotel, the Hotel Okura. I was with a group of 18 reporters representing newspapers, such as The New York Times and The Washington Post, television broadcasters, such as CNN and Fox, and news agencies like Reuters and Bloomberg. My first day of newsgathering activities ended with a notice to come to the hotel by 6:30 a.m. the following morning to cover the Secretary's visit to Meiji Shrine.

The morning of Feb. 17 was finger-numbing cold, as well. The Secretary visiting the shrine showed up before the Japanese and American press corps. Japanese reporters asked her, "What's your impression?" or, "Why are you visiting Meiji Shrine?" It was impressive that the Secretary stopped and answered politely, "Meiji Shrine is very beautiful. I came to the shrine to show respect for the culture of Japan." The question remained about why she chose to visit Meiji Shrine, a religious facility, ahead of other places. It became clear through subsequent newsgathering activities that the U.S. Embassy had added Meiji Shrine to her schedule because there were no official events until noon and that there was no special intent behind it.

After visiting Meiji Shrine, Secretary Clinton returned to the U.S. Embassy and addressed the embassy community. After expressing her appreciation to the embassy staff, the Secretary explained her basic thinking about foreign policy. She also used the word "3D" -- meaning diplomacy, defense and development -- at other venues than the official press conference. The Secretary emphatically said: "Policy does not work well when any of the 3Ds is absent." In other words, foreign policy does not function effectively with diplomacy and military strength alone.

She also used the expression "smart power" several times. Military strength is referred to as "hard power." Over the last several years, "soft power" has been used often instead of "hard power." It means that a nonmilitary approach, such as cultural exchanges, is essential in pursuing foreign policy. The concept was first advocated by Harvard University Prof. Joseph Nye. Then someone came up with the idea of "smart power," which effectively combines other elements to "soft power." In order to carry out foreign policy effectively, Secretary Clinton said: "Smart power must be exercised, and to do so, pragmatism and principles must be combined." It sounded as if she were pointing out the difference between the Obama administration and the Bush administration, which repeatedly made big mistakes being bound by idealism.

It was also impressive that as policy challenges, the Secretary underlined the need to address climate change, develop clean energy, and eliminate poverty. She hardly referred to the war on terror, which was unexpected. Even an American journalist said, "Secretary Clinton has rarely used the words 'war on terror.'" She further called for the establishment of new international networks and

partnerships, saying, "Global issues cannot be resolved by one country alone." This, too, can be said to mark an enormous difference in foreign policy from that of the Bush administration, which was largely inclined toward unilateralism.

After the events at the U.S. Embassy, the Secretary had a working lunch and meeting with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone at the Foreign Ministry's Iikura Guesthouse, and a ceremony was held for the signing of the Guam International Agreement. Regarding the

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agreement, the Secretary said: "The modernization of our military posture in the Pacific reinforces the mission to defend Japan and deter any attack." The signing of the pact was the biggest event in Clinton's visit to Japan. The Iikura Guesthouse press conference room was tightly packed with American and Japanese reporters. Enthusiasm for Clinton was also evident from a U.S. Embassy official's comment: "Even when a high-ranking official at the level of the Secretary of State visits Japan, not so many journalists show up."

In the press conference after signing the pact, Foreign Minister Nakasone said: "I welcome the fact that she chose Japan as the destination for her first overseas trip as Secretary of State, because that is an indication that Secretary Clinton and the Obama administration attach importance to Japan-U.S. relations." Secretary Clinton, too, said: "The alliance between the United States and Japan is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. A coordinated global response is necessary in order to address challenges facing our two countries. As the first and second largest economies in the world, we must fulfill our great responsibilities. Japan has been a leader in laying the groundwork for a clean energy future, and we look forward to working together on a bilateral and multilateral basis on energy and climate change."

Regarding the North Korean issue, Secretary Clinton clarified the Obama administration's basic policy stance: "We discussed the importance of very close coordination in our approach to the Six-Party Talks. We must advance our efforts to secure the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea." She added: "I am aware that the abductee issue is very important for Japan. The abductee issue is part of the Six-Party Talks, as we believe it should be, because it is more likely to yield to progress as part of a comprehensive engagement with North Korea." Further, in response to a question from a reporter, the Secretary, as if sending a clear message to North Korea, noted: "If North Korea abides by the obligations it has already entered into and verifiably and completely eliminates its nuclear program, then there will be a reciprocal response, certainly from the United States. There would be a chance to normalize relations, to enter into a peace treaty rather than an armistice, and to expect assistance for the people of North Korea." After the press conference, the Secretary had a meeting with Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada at the Iikura Guesthouse.

After the meeting, the Secretary left the Iikura Guesthouse for a tea party hosted by the Empress. Of the journalists from the United States, only 10 were allowed to accompany her (to the Imperial Palace). Afterward, the Secretary attended a town hall meeting held at the University of Tokyo. Although the event was scheduled to begin at 5:40 p.m., the Secretary did not arrive at the hall until shortly after 6:00 p.m. After arriving at the hall and a few words by a university representative, Secretary Clinton began talking about an episode 75 years ago in which some members of the New York Yankees toured Japan and drew huge and enthusiastic crowds. The Secretary went on and told the students that she, as a former senator from New York, was a lifelong baseball fan and that she had played baseball when she was young, drawing applause from the students. She also urged the students to ask questions, saying: "Part of my trip here today is to hear your views."

Again, touching on "smart power," the Secretary explained: "It is not only building new global networks or engaging in

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government-to-government interactions, but relying on the wisdom and the common sense of people around the world." The students asked questions in English, and I cannot introduce them all in my blog. Some questions were interesting, and Secretary Clinton's clear-cut responses were truly impressive. The town hall meeting did not end until after 7:00 p.m.

The event proceeded smoothly, and a U.S. Embassy official said to me, "Would you like to have an interview with the Secretary?" I was told to stand by until 9:00 p.m. because the Secretary was likely to be able to spare her time after her meeting with (Democratic Party of Japan President) Ichiro Ozawa that started shortly after 8:00 p.m. But the time was not decided, and I left the hotel a little after 11:00 p.m. Late at night, I received a notice saying, "Please come to the hotel at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow." I arrived at the hotel lobby shortly after 7:00 a.m. the following morning, made arrangements with a State Department press official, and waited for the time for the interview. But again, it was difficult for the Secretary to spare time. Even so, I was able to interview the Secretary, although for only a short time, before leaving the hotel. The following is what took place in my exclusive interview with Secretary Clinton:

(The interview with Secretary Clinton)

-- Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said in his Senate confirmation hearing that China was manipulating its currency. What is your view?

"How to get the global economy back on track is a pressing issue today, and the best way is for the United States and Japan to urge China to work together to resurrect the economy. Our top short-term priority is to turn around the global economy as early as possible (rather than dealing with the question of the Chinese currency)."

-- If America's trade deficit grows, it might significantly reduce the expected impact of the huge U.S. economic stimulus package, wouldn't it?

"Trade imbalance is a serious issue for the United States. The United States has a huge trade deficit not only with China but also with Japan. Other countries rely on exports to the United States. At the same time, China and Japan have been purchasing large amounts of U.S. Treasury bonds. Such a situation was resolved temporarily when my husband (Bill Clinton) was serving as president, but unfortunately, that did not long last. But at present, there is an issue that must be prioritized over the question of trade imbalance, that is, again the recovery of the world economy. Other issues are also serious, but I think they are resolvable."

-- Protectionist moves are seen in the United States, as evidenced by the inclusion of the "Buy American" clause in the stimulus bill that has been enacted recently.

"The clause has been modified. U.S. actions must be in line with international accords. Every country has an urge for protectionism. We must deal with such a situation extremely carefully. If such a move appears, the recovery of the global economy would slow down. I can understand that many people fear losing their jobs. World leaders, including President Obama, must address such a situation. We must work hard to restore trust in markets. To do so, protectionist moves must be blocked.

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-- About future relations between Japan, the United States, and China.

"The United States used to be the world's largest carbon dioxide emitter. Today, China is number one. Climate change is serious, and Japan, the United States and China must work together in addressing China's environmental issues."

Though the interview was conducted in an extremely short period of time, it was impressive that (the Secretary) offered truly clear-cut answers to my questions. The Obama administration was launched just recently, but I felt that Secretary Clinton's words were testimony to (the administration's) basic thinking about its future foreign policy.

Nozomu Nakaoka:

Freelance journalist; contributor to a variety of media; writes books and gives lectures; part-timer lecturer at International Christian University (ICU), Japan Women's University (JWU), and Musashino University; teaches at ICU five undergraduate and graduate subjects, such as American Culture Studies and Modern American Economics; at JWU, teaches Introduction to Economics and Comparative Social Studies; at Musashino University, teaches Asian Economics and other subjects.

(9) Weathervane column: Isoroku Yamamoto and Obama

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 25, 2009

By editorial writer Hiroyuki Akita

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was the Combined Fleet Commander who planned the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor during the Pacific War. Even in the U.S. military he was known as a "great commander." While he was to the end against starting a war with the United States, believing that it would destroy Japan, in the end he himself carried out the role as commander of lighting the fuse. What served as the opportunity for Yamamoto to realize the national strength of the U.S. was his time as a foreign student at Harvard University, where we was sent by the Imperial Navy. He lodged at someone's home in the suburbs of Boston, which was just next door to the house where John F. Kennedy was born. In 1919, Kennedy was just three years old.

The reason why Yamamoto was against launching a war with the U.S. was not just because he knew well the gaps in military power and economic power between that country and Japan. It was also because he perceived the inner strength of the American society for banding together and coming up with a great leader during a time of crisis. He was thinking about Lincoln, a great man whom he especially respected.

"I really liked Lincoln. I think he was a great human being, irrespective of his being an American." This is what he told an aide when he was posted to Washington. He said he had warm feelings toward Lincoln for freeing the slaves and for having even given up his life for the sake of the freedom of mankind. This passage comes from the book "Yamamoto Isoroku," written by Hiroyuki Agawa (Published by Shincho Bunko).

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It has been ninety years this year since Yamamoto was a foreign student at Harvard University. In the United States, oddly enough, the newly inaugurated President Obama similarly deeply respects Lincoln and has used him as a model in facing the nation's difficulties, with feverish hopes behind him. However, the path ahead is steep. He is now being pressed to respond to such issues as the financial crisis, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

A U.S. government source explained: "The intent is to send Secretary Clinton and other officials to as many countries as possible during the first 100 days in order to link up with major countries. Japan is on the priority list." The country that the Obama administration was staring fixedly at was its ally Japan.

The Aso administration, suffering from low support rates and faced with a divided Diet, cannot come up with bold international contributions. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), too, with the possibility of a change of government now in sight, has still not given indicated what the details of its foreign and security

policies will be.

"Japan must not take a stance of waiting. Since it has the capability, it should be able to make a major contribution." Last December, a foreign-policy brain of the Obama administration forcefully urged a DPJ lawmaker in this way, but there was nothing but a feeling of anxiety behind his words.

The DPJ as well does not think it would be good to leave matters as they are now. Last fall, when the Diet deliberations were entering the home stretch on the bill to extend the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, the party secretly contacted the U.S. government and reportedly told officials that it did not intend to the refueling issue to be used for political purposes.

Although the party opposed the bill, it told Washington that it did not intend to willfully block its passage or force a halt in refueling services. Sending this message to Washington, the party was saying that there was room to cooperate with the U.S. administration.

Japanese public opinion in general has greeted the arrival of the Obama administration with good feelings. Yet, behind the popularity of Obama, there are worrisome signs, as seen in the views of those who point to the "decline of the United States," as seen in the failure of the Iraq war and the collapse of the U.S.-style financial system.

In 1929, eight years after Yamamoto attended Harvard, America entered the Great Depression. There were voices within the Japanese military then saying that America no longer need be feared, and Japan in December 1941 launched a war against the United States. In that context, the assertions of Yamamoto and others were squelched.

Even in the 1980s, when the U.S. was saddled with huge deficits in its fiscal and trade areas, the argument about the decline of America again came out. Can Obama overcome the financial crisis and rebuild America? If Yamamoto were still alive, he would likely be inclined to say not to look down on the inner strength of the U.S. based only on what is visible to the eye.

(10) TOP HEADLINES

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Asahi:

Four major ad agency clients saved large amount of money on ad mail illegally using postal fee discount for disabled

Mainichi:

U.S. trying to learn lessons on financial woes from Japan's "lost" decade

Yomiuri:

EU leaders agree to set up financial supervisory body to prevent recurrence of crisis

Nikkei:

Corporate bond issues surge to 1.5 trillion yen in February:
Companies rushing to procure funds

Sankei:

Democratic Party of Japan: Sense of apprehension to precariousness of having a "Prime Minister Ozawa"

Tokyo Shimbun:

Assistance to Brazilian schools, making them eligible for subsidies:
Education Ministry decides to ease regulations on establishment of schools

Akahata:

Solidarity to prevent dismissal of temporary workers: Metal industry workers assemble

(11) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

- (1) Guidelines for use of weapons: Do not cash in on piracy issue
- (2) Child-care system: Hurry to invest in future

Mainichi:

- (1) Japan-China foreign ministerial meeting: Do not spark political friction with Senkaku Island sovereignty issue
- (2) Kashiwazaki Kariwa nuclear power plant: Modest and cautious decision needed to restart operations

Yomiuri:

- (1) Japan-China foreign ministerial meeting: Essence of reciprocal relationship to be called into question
- (2) Trial of Pol Pot group: How can their responsibility for committing massacre be pursued?

Nikkei:

- (1) U.S. program to pull out of Iraq indicates realistic decision
- (2) We want Japan and China to discuss economic matters as well

Sankei:

- (1) Illegal exports to North Korea: Strictly monitor alternate routes
- (2) Invitation of Tokyo Olympic Games: Diet resolution will give momentum

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) One airplane accident after another: We wonder whether airline carriers are slighting safety

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- (2) ASEAN: Stability and unity are indispensable

Akahata:

- (1) President Obama and Afghanistan: Time to take action for political settlement

(Corrected copy): Ozawa's 7th Fleet remark: DPJ says such is not the party's view; Ruling camp criticizes Ozawa as "lacking capability to run the government"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
March 2, 2009

In connection to a series of remarks by Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro, including, "The U.S. military presence of only the 7th Fleet in the Far East would be enough," a senior member of the DPJ appearing on a television program on March 1 was pressed to explain what Ozawa had meant.

Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka on an NHK talk show explained: "During the meeting between Mr. Ozawa and Secretary of State Clinton, he made a statement, 'Since there have been major changes since the war, consideration should be given as to what to do, and if both countries agree, Japan should carry out a role that is should be doing.' Using that example, when the time comes for Japan to play such a role with the U.S.'s concurrence, it probably would take such a form (as the 7th Fleet being enough)." He then added, "As to whether that will become the DPJ's conclusion, discussion has yet to start." He stressed that Ozawa's remark was not the party's official view.

Vice President Kan, appearing on Fuji Television, said: "It is not much of a problem within the party. The U.S. Marines on Okinawa are not there to guard Okinawa, and the government, too, has decided that most of them should return to Guam. I don't think that the direction is that much different (from the government's position)." He sought to check the government and ruling camp which have been heightening their criticism.

In contrast, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Election Strategy

Committee Deputy Chairman Yoshihide Suga, speaking in Iwate Prefecture, criticized: "He has rejected the very basis of Japan's defense policy. If such a willful person becomes prime minister, the relationship of trust between Japan and the United States will disappear."

ZUMWALT